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sidered an outrage, is not looked upon as a crime, unless the woman be of such a rank as to claim respect from the perpetrator.

When all things are taken into consideration regarding the connubial system of these people, their notions of chastity, and their habits in respect of it, we shall have no reason to say but what they keep tolerably well within those bounds which honour and decency dictate *;

* It may be objected that such habits as we have been describing must often lead to a disregard of public decency, and which therefore must be very bad for the morals of the younger branches of society of both sexes, by making them acquainted with what they ought not to have any idea of, before the voice of nature whispered the important secret. In reply to this, we must observe, that no nation can well pay greater attention to public decency than the Tonga people: but at the same time we acknowledge, that conversation is often intermingled with allusions, even when women are present, which could not be allowed in any decent society in England: this, however, is never done if married women, or chiefs superior to the speaker, are near; because it would be disrespectful: but such subjects are not the result of depraved notions, they are rather the offspring of the imagination, and occasionally hazarded as vehicles of joke and humour. Notwithstanding this, the blush of female modesty suffuses the cheek in these islands as well as elsewhere, although the occasion of it is not so much considered an offence: though the females are very deficient in artificial modesty, they amply make up for it by the more genuine feeling of natural bashfulness. Those among us whose morality is almost skin deep, and who make a vast account of outside appearances, will perhaps condemn them for this.

In respect to children of both sexes, it must be acknow-

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831 and if it be asked what effect this system has
182 upon the welfare and happiness of society, it may be safely answered, that there is not the

831 ledged that they become acquainted with such subjects at a
182 very early age. Nevertheless, a young female, (suppose 8, 9, or 10 years old), conducts herself with becoming modesty,
864 and any indecent allusion would put her to the blush. She possesses a kind of modest pride, which she probably copies from the example of her mother, or else it is her natural bashfulness, or perhaps both, which generally constitutes the safeguard of her chastity, till the affections of the heart growing ripe with riper years, she at length listens to the solicitations of her lover. In regard to the boys, Mr. Mariner never observed nor heard of any pernicious effect in their conduct, resulting from too early an acquaintance with these matters. When no secret is made, what is there to excite any farther inquiry? But if the subject be involved in mystery, it seizes strong hold of the mind; it becomes a frequent topic of discourse; and, what is worse, the curious inquirer is not contented with partial hearsay evidence, he has recourse to experience; for as long as any thing is concealed from him, he is restless and dissatisfied; and when he knows all that he *can* know, it will be, probably, at a period much more early than is proper: but in what other way can we account for the facts? Mr. Mariner saw no men at Tonga, nor did he hear of any, who made debauchery the business of their lives: on the contrary, they were wrestlers, racers, boxers, and club-fighters, strong, well made men, with fine swelling
831 muscles. Another circumstance must be noticed, as con-
182 nected with morality, and that is, personal cleanliness, in
[515] which no nation can excel (without ridiculous refinement) the people of these islands; and it is not unworthy of observation, that personal cleanliness sometimes argues cleanliness
[171] of mind and idea. As to certain preposterous habits, which so disgrace the moral character of nations west of them, and which have been said to infect the natives of some of the